

payment of their salaries; and, second, that the Civil Service Superannuation Act shall apply to the commissioner and deputy commissioners. So far so good. But a military gentleman was appointed in April a year ago to make a report on the penitentiaries, and when we got his report we found that he made some of the recommendations which were made by Mr. Harry Anderson of the *Globe* twenty years ago and which have yet not been adopted.

We should have some further system of inspections of these places other than by crown officers. These are all crown officers mentioned in the resolution. If grand juries are not to be allowed in, somebody should be allowed to go in representing the public. The hon. member for Hamilton East (Mr. Ross) has a large delegation going to Niagara Falls next week-end. There is no reason why there should not be, under the act at the present time, a board of visitors, as there is now already, consisting of members of parliament and others. If the minister will not allow grand juries to go in, he should arrange for some visits by committees when the house is sitting. I do hope that something will be done about this matter of real prison reform, because it has been made a political football for twenty years.

Mr. H. W. HERRIDGE (Kootenay West): I rise to speak briefly in support of the remarks made by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol). I certainly could not agree with the opinions of the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot). I want to compliment the government on marching triumphantly behind the leadership of Canadian public opinion and Canadian conscience in these matters. I am quite sure there is a great demand for improvement in our penal administration and I think this legislation represents a step in the right direction. I am of opinion that, under the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ilesley), in the very near future we are going to see something done in this matter.

Before sitting down, I wish to say that, in my opinion, the whole success of our form of penal institutions, their administration and their improvement in the future will depend almost entirely on the type of personnel who are appointed to these high positions. I do hope that every consideration will be given to selecting men who are not of military mind, who do not have an entirely disciplinarian outlook, but who have a full and complete understanding of human nature and its treatment under these conditions.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Golding in the chair.

Mr. GREEN: Before the resolution carries, will the minister explain to the committee just how far he is proposing to go in the bill? I notice that the resolution mentions only the appointment of a commissioner and two deputy commissioners. It may be that the intention is to make other improvements in our penitentiary system; and I hope there are to be improvements along the lines suggested in the Archambault report and also in the report of Major-General Gibson. Will the minister give us in some detail what his plan is for improving the penitentiary system?

Right Hon. J. L. ILSLEY (Minister of Justice): I think it would be more appropriate to do that at a later stage. This is a very simple bill. It changes the plan which was laid down in the Penitentiary Act of 1939, an act which has not been proclaimed. The act of 1939 authorized the appointment of a penitentiaries commission consisting of three persons; and the government after giving careful consideration to the desirability of appointing a three-man commission, came to the conclusion that it was more desirable to appoint a one-man commission with two deputy commissioners. The appointment of a one-man commission and two deputy commissioners is the whole purpose of this bill. I think it is due the committee that I give some reasons why that change in plan was decided on.

The Penitentiary Act, 1939, was enacted as a result of the report of a royal commission appointed to investigate the penal system of Canada. Heretofore the administration of the penitentiaries has been the direct responsibility of a superintendent who has reported to the deputy minister of justice and has acted under his instructions, subject to the direction and approval of the minister. It is true that the superintendent was assisted in his duties by three inspectors, but in practice not only all matters of policy but all day-to-day administrative decisions in connection with penitentiaries were submitted to and dealt with by the superintendent personally.

The royal commission considered that the problems of penal administration were too large in scope and too serious in results to be thus concentrated in the hands of one man. They referred to the system of administration in force in Great Britain where there was a prison commission consisting of a chairman and two other commissioners, one administrative and one medical, reinforced by four assistant commissioners. They pointed out that under this system each member of the commission assumed responsibility for his own share of the work of the department and each